



eNews from Sen. Lisa Murkowski - Vol. 2, Issue 13 : : [Visit Senator Murkowski's Web Site](#)
September 8 , 2006

September 9th Named FASD Awareness Day

I sponsored a resolution in the Senate to name September 9, 2006 as National Fetal Spectrum Awareness Day. Tragically, Alaska has the highest rate of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders (FASD) in the nation. Furthermore, among Alaskan Native communities, the rate of FASD is 15 times higher than non-Native areas in the state.

By continuing to raise awareness, we can hopefully eliminate the harm that drinking during pregnancy causes our most vulnerable population - - our children. Tomorrow, on Fetal Alcohol Awareness Day, let us remember the innocent babies inflicted with this disorder and then let us imagine the potential that these babies could have attained but for the damage done by alcohol.

National Fetal Spectrum Awareness Day encourages the American people to promote awareness of the effects of prenatal exposure to alcohol; to increase compassion for individuals affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol; to minimize further effects of prenatal exposure to alcohol; and to ensure healthier communities throughout the United States. On this day, Americans are also encouraged to observe a moment of reflection on the ninth hour of September 9, 2006, to remember that during the nine months of pregnancy a woman should not consume any alcohol.

PREEMIE Act Passes Senate

I was an original cosponsor of the PREEMIE Act which passed the Senate August 1. The Act amends the Public Health Service Act to require the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to expand and coordinate NIH research on preterm labor and delivery, infant mortality and low birth weight infants. In addition it establishes the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Units Network and the Neonatal Research Units Network within NIH. For more information on this important legislation [click here](#).

IRS Announces Refunds for Discontinued Telephone Tax

The Internal Revenue Service has announced that it will refund taxpayers up to \$60 next year to reimburse them for the defunct long-distance telephone tax. Taxpayers need no proof they paid the tax and can claim a refund on their 2006 federal income-tax returns. Refunds will be subtracted from the bills of taxpayers who wind up owing the government or added to the refunds for those who overpaid their taxes. [For more information visit the IRS Website](#).

Combating Autism Act Passes Senate

In early August the Senate passed the Combat Autism Act. The landmark legislation, which authorizes \$900 million for autism funding, now moves to the U.S. House of Representatives for approval before it can be signed into law. Once signed, the Act will join a short list of "single-disease" legislation – the most notable being the 1990 Ryan White CARE Act for HIV/AIDS.

Autism is a developmental brain disorder that now affects as many as one in every 166 children in the United States. Autism is commonly diagnosed by the age of three, and in some cases, as early as one year. Characterized by varying degrees of impairment in communication skills, social interactions and restricted, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, children with autism can exhibit symptoms that run mild to severe with widely differing symptom profiles. More information about autism can be found at

Welcome Back to School

Across the State, Young Alaskans are returning to school. I wish you all a safe and successful year. Don't forget to celebrate Citizenship Day/Constitution Day to mark the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787. Several years ago, U.S. Senator Robert Byrd added this requirement for schools that receive federal funding to help ensure that students learn about our nation's Constitution. Many interesting resources are available at the [USED website](#).

August Recess Travel

During the August recess I traveled throughout the State to meet with constituents. What I enjoy most about my job as your Senator is the opportunity to visit new areas of Alaska and meet with Alaskans as their representative in Congress. I enjoy learning about our unique cultures and meeting new people, and I appreciate the opportunity to listen to the ideas and concerns of local residents. Below are a few highlights from my trip.

Bering Straits

I traveled across the Bering Straits region and had the opportunity to visit the villages of Stebbins, St. Michael, Unalakleet, Shishmaref, Elim and White Mountain. I had a great time visiting with residents, and I believe it gave me the chance to learn firsthand the challenges and opportunities in the region. I look forward to coming back again soon.



(Clockwise from top left) Walking Tour of Elim, Taking the Helm of our Navajo Aircraft, Meeting with an Elder in Elim, Discussing Public Safety Issues in Shishmaref.



Enjoying a Sunny Day with Community Members in White Mountain

Kenai Kids Classic

I hosted the first annual Kenai River Salmon Adventure on August 8. I joined children from the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula in their fishing expedition out on the river. Sponsored by the Kenai River Sportfishing Association, the Adventure gives children, who may not otherwise have the opportunity to do so, the chance to catch their first fish.



Weighing in a Young Alaskan's Catch

Military Appreciation Day

On August 17, I participated in the Military Appreciation Day in Fairbanks. It was uplifting to

see thousands of Alaskans come together to recognize our troops. The event also gave me the chance to meet with United States Army Secretary Francis Harvey. I took the opportunity to share with him the concerns that I and many Alaskans share regarding the extension of the 172nd Stryker Brigade. I let him know that any extension beyond 120 days is unacceptable.



(Clockwise from top) Discussing Issues with Members of the 172nd, Senator Stevens and I Thanking an American for his Service, and Discussing the Extension with Secretary Harvey.

Ketchikan Keel Laying Ceremony

I had the opportunity to etch my name into history as I welded my signature on the keel plate for the M/V Susitna. The vessel is the first of its kind and will serve the Upper Cook Inlet. For more information visit [this site](#).



Proudly Showing off The M/V Susitna's Keel Plate

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Washington, D.C. Office 709 Hart Senate Building Washington D.C., 20510 202-224-6665

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